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Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation

PROVINCE SUPPORTS FUTURE ABORIGINAL LEADERS

VICTORIA – The Province of British Columbia is providing $20,000 to support a conference this week to help Aboriginal youth from across Canada prepare for a healthy and successful future.

"British Columbia and Canada need healthy Aboriginal youth positioned to become tomorrow's leaders, and this conference is focused on addressing the most urgent and serious challenges they face," said Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation Minister Michael de Jong. "Young Aboriginal people attending are empowered to overcome social issues such as family violence, suicide, gangs, sexual exploitation, bullying and abuse."

The 6th Annual National Aboriginal Youth Violence & Changing Times Training Conference brings together Aboriginal youth, youth leaders and youth workers from every province and territory for a three-day gathering focused on the theme "Healthy Youth Today, Healthy Nations Tomorrow." Participants learn from sharing their experiences, attending inspiring workshops, participating in cultural activities and hearing motivational presentations by successful Aboriginal youth role models.

"This conference is a great way to let young people know that, with our booming economy, there are incredible opportunities available for them today," said Advanced Education Minister Murray Coell. "Aboriginal youth in our province have a promising future and we're working to take down any and all barriers for them to reach their full potential."

"With an increasing Aboriginal youth population in British Columbia, so many of the good ideas being shared about rising above obstacles are coming from the voices of Aboriginal youth," said Children and Family Development Minister Tom Christensen. "The young people attending this conference are seizing on an important opportunity to be educated and inspired toward a life of success."

Funding for the Aboriginal youth conference reflects the Province's support for British Columbia's young and growing Aboriginal population. The Province acknowledges the great tradition of Aboriginal leadership in B.C. and recognizes youth prosperity as an important aspect of the New Relationship with Aboriginal people founded on respect, recognition and reconciliation.

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